(iii) In June 2003, restriction on duration on royalty payment under the automatic route was removed irrespective of the extent of foreign equity participation.

(c) The number of Foreign Technology Collaboration approvals granted during the last three years is as under:

Year	Total
2000	418
2001	288
2002	307

(d) Data on royalty payments for technology collaborations with foreign entities are subsumed in the data relating to Current Account transactions maintained by Reserve Bank of India. Data on royalty payments is not maintained separately.

Incentives for Special Economic Zones

741. SHRI RAJ KUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have given more incentives to the Special Economic Zones and as a result the export Processing Zones;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the benefits derived from these incentives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) All the existing Export Processing Zone have been converted into Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Major incentives and facilities available under Special Economic Zone Scheme include duty free import/domestic procurement of goods for development, operation and maintenance of SEZs and units therein; external commercial borrowing without any maturity restriction through recognized banking channels; facility to set up Off-shore Banking Units in SEZs; exemption from service tax; exemption from Central Sales Tax on sales made from Domestic Tariff Area; Income-tax exemption

for 10 years in the first 15 years to developers of SEZs' Income Tax holiday for 5 years, 50% tax exemption for 2 years and 50% of re-investments out of profits earned for three years to SEZ unit.

(c) Exports from SEZs has been steadily on the increase and exports by SEZ units during 2002-2003 were of the order of Rs. 10,056.62 crores as compared to Rs. 9189.55 crores during the previous year.

Free trade agreement between India and Thailand

742. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Thailand are negotiating for concluding free trade agreement;

(b) the existing position of balance of trade between the two countries; and

(c) the items which India imports from Thailand and items which India exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) A Joint Negotiating Group (JNG) has been set up for drafting a Framework Agreement of India-Thailand Free Trade Agreement covering goods, services and investments. The Framework Agreement is expected to be signed in October, 2003 during the Prime Minister's visit to Thailand.

(b) The present position of the bilateral trade between India and Thailand is as follows:—

(US $ Million)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total	Balance of Trade
2001-02	632.58	423.05	1055.63	(+)209.53
2001-02(Apr-Feb)	567.58	392.76	960.34	(+)174.82
2002-03(Apr-Feb)	653.54	342.58	996.12	(+)310.96

(c) The major items which India imports from Thailand are electronic goods, machinery except electrical and electronics, artificial resigns,